

Creating
a Felted
Backpack

with Gabriella Kovács
textile artist





Recommendations how to use the tutorial video the most effectively

Before purchasing the materials, watch the episode on *"Materials and Tools"*.

Before each phase, watch the corresponding video part and make notes if necessary. For example, write down the number of rolls, with a pipe, without a pipe, etc. You can also find help for this in the description.

You can modify the template while drawing it. If a shorter shape is more comfortable for your height, then change the length of the bag. Also, you may change the length of the cover according to your preferences.

Adjusting the length of your strap will be discussed in episode *"Making the straps"*.

Structuring your schedule: I will indicate in the description where you can let the work rest and in what way.

The instructional video has been prepared using the materials, shrinkage ratios, and felting tips provided in the description. Therefore, please kindly adhere to the specified materials and avoid deviating from the outlined instructions.



1. Materials & Tools

Materials

The total weight of my completed backpack with the prefelt layer is around 420 g. Please purchase one and a half times as much as you need, so that you can experiment with colours.

The numbers I wrote down do not include this extra amount!

- For the main body of the backpack with cover: 500 grams of fine Australian merino wool top (Micron size 18-19) The wool for the cover weights about 80 grams
- For the prefelt: about 60 grams of fine Australian merino wool top (Micron size 18-19)
- Yarns for prefelt decoration (single-stranded, multi-stranded wool or loosely spun synthetic fibres are also suitable)
- Silk fibre, hankie or viscose thread – 15 grams for the cover and 15 grams for the backpack's main body. Colour should be matching to the colour of the wool underneath
- For the strap: 15 × 70 cm strip of silk pongee 05, chiffon, synthetic fibre, or linen fabric
- If you like, you may use 4-6 pcs of shank buttons, instead of creating felt buttons yourself
- 1pc of magnetic closure (18mm)
For example: https://www.etsy.com/market/purse_magnetic_lock
- 2 pcs of rectangle rings 1" (25 mm wide inside),
For example: <https://www.bobbingirl.co.uk/rectangle-ring-3-sizes-antique-brass>





Tools

- Printed templates
- Sticky tape for securing the printed template pieces together
- Baking paper, or transparent sketch paper for designing the pattern
- Ruler
- Pencil and pen
- Measuring tape
- 2 mm thick resist material for the template 110 × 110 cm (44 × 44 inches)
- IKEA non-slip mat (Variera, with dots)
- Bubble wrap for making the prefelt, 100 × 70 cm (40 × 28 inches)
- Cotton sheet for rolling (e.g. a piece of an old bedsheet) 100 × 70 cm (40 × 28 inches) or longer
- Ribbon for tying
- 2 pieces of thin plastic foil for turning the piece over, min. 100 × 70 cm (40 × 28 inches)
- 2 pieces of thin plastic foil strips for turning the straps 70 × 15 cm (28 × 16 inches)
- Roller for rolling, approx. 50-60 cm, 6 cm in diameter
- Towels for hand wiping and to wipe the excess water
- Kitchen sponge cloths kitchen towels
- Synthetic netting (e.g. an old curtain) to secure the fibres during layout, about 70 × 60 cm (28 × 24 inches)
- Wooden tools, such as a felting mouse, for felting the surface and forming the shape
- Small wire brush for loosening the prefelt fibres (optional)
- Bowl for the water
- Spray bottle or a ball brause sprinkler
- Bar of soap
- Scissors (sharp, pointed), both small and long-edged
- 2 pairs of pliers to apply the square rings, and for adjusting the felt edges
- Pins
- Sewing needle, thread
- Felting needle
- Vibration sander machine (optional)

In the video I use wooden felting tools:

- Paka design: <https://www.facebook.com/pakadesign1/>
- Felting device: <https://www.wollknoll.eu/shop/tools-equipment-machinery-895/felting/other-felting-supplies/felting-device.html>



Suggestions for the individual episodes:

2. Design and Templates

In the video I worked with my original craft paper template – the template you will print is identical with mine.

You can print and cut:

Print the drawing of the templates from the downloadable PDF's.

- 1.: "In full size printing" 60 × 80 means: If you have the opportunity to print in large size, use these files. It is advisable to check if the printed dimensions are according to the specifications.
2. "On A4 pages printing" means: You print them on A/4 papers and tape them together. You can find the method of how to secure the A/4 prints together at the beginning of Episode 3. (Making the Prefelt).

Print one of the design suggested by me from the "Cover Template and Design" PDFs or design your own for the cover of the backpack.

Print the main pattern of the backpack's body, the cover of the backpack and the pockets template as well.

Cut out and trace them around onto the 2 mm thick resist material sheet:

- 1pc. template of the main form of the bag (You will find it in: "The Main Body Template" PDF).
- 2pc. pocket templates in two separate parts (pocket sizes: 26 × 14 cm, and 26 × 20 cm). You will find it in: "The Main Body Template" PDF.
- 1pc. template of backpack's cover.
- Don't forget the 3 cm extra area. You will find it in: "Cover Template and Design" PDF.
- 1pc. 10 × 44 cm strap USE A RULER.
- 2 pcs. small strips for the ends of the straps. Size: 1,5 × 7 cm USE A RULER.

Idea: You can modify the template while drawing it. If a shorter shape is more comfortable for your height, then change the length of the bag, or you can change the length of the cover if you prefer.



Notes:





3. Making the Prefelt

We work with 120% enlargement compared to the Cover Template.

- 1 colouring layer + 4 layers

Chapters in the episode:

00:13 - Joining and Gluing the Printed Plan

06:32 - Making the Prefelt

Notes:



*When you've finished this part, you can leave it to dry, it's an opportunity to relax.
Or you can continue working.*



4. Cutting the Prefelt

If you need to loosen the back of the prefelt with a wire brush, do it before cutting out the patterns.

Notes:



When you've finished this part, you can leave it to dry, it's an opportunity to relax. Or you can continue working.



5. Cover of the Backpack

We work with 140% magnification. The printed templates are already enlarged.

Work with thin laying during the entire work process.

We work with 6 layers and 1 thin colour layer.

Do not felt the upper 3 cm strip, leave it dry.

Chapter in the episode:

1:22:10 - Pattern Corrections Possibilities

Notes:



*When you've finished this part, you can leave it to dry, it's an opportunity to relax.
Or you can continue working.*



6. Making the Straps

Work parallel on the two straps.

Lay the wool for the two shorter straps at the same time. Rotate and fatten both, in parallel.

Then for the two long straps in the same way, work on both in parallel.

Felting is done individually.

Preparation time for the short strap is 30 minutes each, for the long one it is 45 minutes each.

Notes:



*When you've finished this part, you can leave it to dry, it's an opportunity to relax.
Or you can continue working.*



7. Making the Inner Pockets

We work with 4 layers.

Preparation time for the pocket is about 30 minutes.

Notes:



Cover it with a nylon so that it doesn't dry out until next day. It's an opportunity to relax. Or you can continue working.



8. Main Body of the Backpack

Now comes a long working day.

The body of the bag is made of 4 layers. **Lay wool thinly during the entire work process.**

Don't massage the corners of the backpack flap too much yet, because the cover still needs to be fitted.

The upper part should only be caressed a little up to the point where the cover is attached.

Chapters in the episode:

00:13 - The First Two Layers

31:25 - The Third and Fourth Layer

Notes:





9. Fitting the Cover

When you are done with the parts shown in the video, make sure that the cover is completely attached to the main form. Only then start rolling. Don't skip the seam before rolling.

Chapter in the episode:

16:57 - Removing the Template from the Top Section

Notes:





10. Felting

Don't skip the seam before rolling.

A little reminder about rolling:

- 40x rolling with pipe, from three directions (from the two longitudinal sides and from the bottom side)
- Move the pockets' template out
- Turn the object upside down
- 40x rolling with pipe, the back of the backpack should be on top, roll it from the upper part

Take out the template.

- Back from the top, with pipe, roll it 25x from the two longitudinal sides
- While you are rubbing reach into the inside carefully, so that the pockets and the side do not get felted together. When unfolding, massage out the thickened parts on the sides and remove threads.
- Now the cover is on the top, and roll it 25x from the bottom.

The stretched-out part should be inside the coil. Watch the video what I mean (28:53 onwards).

- Back on the top, with pipe, roll 25x from the upper part of the backpack.

Notes:





11. Fulling and Forming

Rolling without pipe, just wrapped in the sheet

The cover is on the top: roll 15x from all four directions.

Meanwhile, kneading, rewarming, shaping.

Drain or spin the water without rinsing (watch at 27:25 in this episode)

Chapters in the episode:

13:35 - Let's Knead Further!

40:28 - Making the Buttonholes

49:04 - Embossing the Edges of the Pattern

Notes:



You may now squeeze the water out and wrap the backpack in a plastic bag, so it doesn't dry out until the next day. It's an opportunity to relax. Or you can continue working.



12. Final Touches

This phase can take up to two hours in real time. This will make the shape nice, the edges straight and the surface smooth. Not worth skipping.

Notes:





13. Making the Bits and Pieces

- Put out 4 thin layers
- Rolling 50x in a small sheet
- Peel it off the sheet
- rolling 30x again
- Cut out the felt
- Rolling the cut out circular felts 30x

Chapters in the episode:

00:12 - Making Small Paddings for the Closure

11:40 - Making Little Balls for Buttons

A little hint on how to make four identical pieces.

21:53 - How to Sew the Buttons On

29:38 - Inserting a Magnetic Closure

Notes:





Thank you for felting with me. Have fun!

Please, send me photos about your finished backpack to gobi@masema.hu

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P.S: When you post on the internet, please post only your finished pieces and keep phase shots for your private viewing.

Thank you!